



The Skeptical Inquirer

Behind the aesthetics of a doubtful mind

By Trinity Morton
Staff Writer

Marceau Verdiere began to doubt religious faith at nine years old, when a Catholic priest dragged him by the ear and slammed his head against the chalkboard for reversing the traditional colors of heaven and hell in a painting done at school.

"The act was violent, and the aftermath was unsettling," Verdiere reflected.

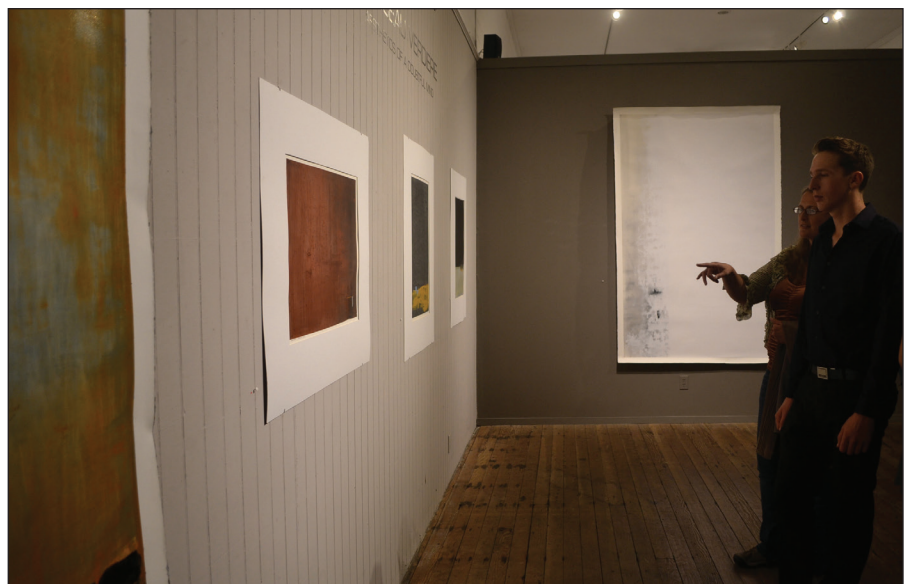
The memory of the near loss of his ear is inextricably tied with another experience. Around the time of the incident with the priest, Verdiere paid attention in church for the first time. What he heard troubled him.

"I remember thinking, 'Wow, [the priest] is threatening me,'" Verdiere said.

At nine years old, Verdiere was left feeling shaken and confused. He grew up in a devoutly Catholic village in France around the size of Blue Lake. Everyone in the small community attended church, but after Verdiere's experiences, his family became the "black sheep" by no longer attending. He never looked back—until now.

Verdiere was accepted into Les Chemins d'Art Sacré, a famous art show put on by 12 ancient churches in France. The accepted artists exhibit a body of work in one of the churches and each of their pieces must be paired with biblical text. Verdiere had admired the exhibits for years. After he heard that a friend of his, a non-Catholic artist like himself, was able to exhibit, he decided to apply.

"In my application I clearly stated that I'm an atheist," he explained. "The fact that I stated I was an atheist made me stand out. I think it actually helped me get their attention. The interview lasted for three hours. Mostly they couldn't understand why I would want to do something like this based on my background."



PHOTOS BY TRINITY MORTON

Above, Marceau Verdiere's doubt-themed paintings exhibited at Pianté Gallery in Old Town, Eureka. Below, NPA junior Xavier Setzer (front) and his mother, Francesca Piethe examine Verdiere's work at Pianté.

One of the main reasons he applied was that the prospect of having his work displayed in such a beautiful space as the 12th century church excited him. He also hoped that the notoriety of the project might "...put [him] on the map in European art." Between the 12 churches, the show attracts as many as 200,000 visitors.

Knowing the only way he could produce work with integrity was to diverge from the promotion of faith, Verdiere decided to focus his exhibit on the concept of doubt so as not to disrespect the Catholic Church. Originally he intended to base his work about doubt on the musings of philosophical thinkers such as Kant and Pascal. However, he soon realized that he had to make his project more personal.

"Quickly I realized that reading wasn't the way to go. I had to make

it personal ... [I thought] 'let me tell my story of how I went from a little perfect Catholic boy to an atheist,'" Verdiere said.

His paintings tell this story through three stages. The first group of paintings is titled "The After-shock," and depicts his feelings immediately after his encounter with the priest. Verdiere described these pieces as "the most violent paintings in the series."

The second group is called "Horizon Disturbed." These pieces explore the time when he was still contemplating faith. The horizons in these paintings are never quite calm, signifying Verdiere's personal unrest.

The final group is titled "Afterthoughts," which he described as little intellectual flare-ups that disturb

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PHOTO BY TRINITY MORTON
NPA French and Visual Arts teacher Marceau Verdiere was accepted to exhibit in Les Chemins d'Art Sacré, a famous art show put on by 12 ancient churches in France. The artists involved exhibit a body of work in one of the churches and each of their pieces must be paired with biblical text. Verdiere provides a unique perspective to the show, given that he is an atheist. He will travel to France in the spring of 2015 to present his pieces.

UFO8 stays together despite challenges

By Dexter McNally
Staff Writer

UFO8, known locally for its clash of bold hard-rock and mellow indie influences, has been helping tear up dance floors since 2011. UFO8 is headed by NPA senior Chris Reynoso on vocals and guitar and features Alec Perrone and Dash Rowe on drums and bass respectively.

UFO8 began as a pet project between Reynoso and Perrone. The band formed organically from a mutual love of music and a desire to learn it. "The band was just an

afterthought at first, we just wanted to make music," Reynoso said. "You know, Black Keys and White Stripes-esque."

Reynoso credits the formation of UFO8 to the collaboration between himself and the other band members. He explained, "Alec and I started [the band] based only on music we both liked, stuff like Led Zeppelin and Pink Floyd. We both listened to other music outside of the band that the other didn't care

See UFO8 page 3



PHOTO SUBMITTED

From left to right: bassist Dash Rowe, drummer Alec Perrone and guitarist/vocalist Chris Reynoso. The UFO8 bandmates attempt a High School Musical jump in front of graffiti. The band formed in 2011 and is still together today.

SPORTS NPA cross country team finishes the season

Six members of the cross country team traveled to Hayward, California to compete at the North Coast Section Cross Country Championship on November 22nd. This meet finished the season. Senior Seth Talkington reflects on his sport experience. See page 3



ENVIRONMENT Greg King speaks on the NPA Climate Project

NPA students met to discuss the climate project for the first time on November 18th of this year, with a plan to create projects within the group that address climate change locally. The project is headed by Greg King. See page 4



POLITICS Low number of votes in 2014 midterm elections

Humboldt County's Registrar of Voters, Carolyn Crnich and Andrew Freeman speak on the importance of voting as a young person after two thirds of eligible voters did not participate in the midterm elections. See page 5



The Word

What is an issue you feel passionate about, and what are you doing about it?



Roberts

Alexis Roberts: “Women’s rights and women’s health. I work with the Roshni Center which provides education and health clinics for girls in rural Pakistan. Another organization I’m part of is Spare Change. This program is a peer education program and we educate an audience on sexual reproductive health among other things such as body image and mental health.”



Post

Rachel Post: “Arts in the schools and having music taught to kids. Both of my parents are music teachers. ... and I’ve been given the opportunity to work at Kidco. Teaching music or dance or a combination of the two to whatever age group. I am very excited to start incorporating music and dance into the lives of young children because it impacts the ways they think and also their creative process and how they see the world, because I know it affected me.”



Hakenen

Kirk Hakenen: “Lack of exercise in youth. To motivate, I tell people to work out. I referee for the Mad River Youth Soccer League. It helps the community, and I get paid.”



McGahan

Olivia McGahan: “Genocide, especially in Darfur. I participate in Jewish World Watch, we do walks to end genocide every year. With My Synagogue, Congregation Shomrei Torah in Santa Rosa. I’ve generated about \$1,800 in the past year to help refugees in Darfur.”



Profant

Zosine Profant: “Photographing our structures in the West. A lot of people have been tearing things down without doing historic preservation surveys. That’s not really happening on this side of America because that’s really not set in stone by the law. So what I’m trying to do is get grants and permission to actually go around photographing structures. I want to start with the tractor parade. It’s important that these things are documented in order to move forward.”

Quotes for “The Word” were compiled by Maya Makino, staff writer



PHOTO BY TRINITY MORTON
Janes Creek on NPA campus prior to beginning restoration. The creek has since swelled in size since due to the recent influx of rain.

Janes Creek: the fine fight to fix the flow

By Liam Achterberg-Muñoz
Staff Writer

The fight for the revival of the environment in the Arcata Bottoms is not easy. Restoration movements have been going on all over Humboldt since 1987 and NPA recently joined forces with a number of other local organizations to help improve the waterways in Arcata.

Alyssa Guerrero, the NPA chemistry and biology teacher, is responsible for leading this project. “It was a parent who advocated to make [the Janes Creek restoration] a part of the students’ educations,” Guerrero said. “As teachers and administrators, we agreed on the value of it.” The project was proposed last year, but it wasn’t until earlier this semester that the plan began to become a reality.

“The goal of the project is to restore salmon populations,” Guerrero explained. The main objective is to remove invasive grasses and improve the water flow in the portion of Janes Creek on campus. The school hopes to help the movement of salmon through the creek.

The restoration project will teach

students about the environment and the world around them. “The most important thing for students to realize is that it’s not just a creek with fish moving through it. It’s really an organism,” Guerrero added. “You begin to realize that everything else around you is really a system that you’re a part of and interacting with. It responds to you and you respond to it”

Restoration was intended to begin earlier this semester, but due to adverse weather conditions, the project has been postponed until later in the school year. “The rains ended up starting a week before everyone had predicted,” Guerrero commented. “The issue with the rain is that it makes the water levels high enough to where fish are actually moving through the creek. For us to disturb the water, by removing [invasive] grass and working there, [we] would end up putting too much silt into the water.” This silt would negatively affect the fish and defeat the purpose of the project. It was decided that it would be better to wait until the water level of the river subsides to resume work on it.

“Our earliest opportunity is probably going to be late spring, in March

or maybe April,” Guerrero said. To resume work, the water has to go down and stay low for a long period of time. This could prove to be difficult, given that weather could easily change and delay the plan once again.

The project will hopefully start in 2015, but there is no end date in mind. “Restoration takes a really, really long time. I don’t think the work ever stops because it’s a living system and as you make changes, it’s going to respond to that,” Guerrero revealed.

When work on the creek is resumed, the steps will be small. First, students will remove invasive reed canary grass and make small changes. The creek’s reaction to these alterations will determine how the work is continued. After this first phase, students will find ways to recreate the positive responses and think of new ideas for growth and decisive change.

“It’s not about the time line. It’s really about just knowing that you’re doing a little bit more than what was done before,” Guerrero said. With slow changes and dedication, NPA will begin to locally help the environment and bring valuable change to its surroundings.

Pineapples, crowbars, choir, oh my! Winter traditions that spark school spirit

By Gaia DeNisi
Staff Writer

The holiday season at NPA is imbued with traditions and legends whose origins are unknown. As holiday caroling and Secret Snowflake draw near we reminisce about the past of NPA’s most sacred traditions.

Secret Snowflake, now with over 140 students, is a much more trying process than it used to be. “Doing Secret Snowflake with 40 students took, I don’t know, maybe an hour, now it takes most of the afternoon” Cheyenne Montalbin, NPA teacher and alumnus said. “That’s the biggest change.”

Despite the drastic increase in school size, the tradition of Secret Snowflake has remained intact as the embodiment of holiday spirit.

Though it is a cherished part of the winter holidays, there are elements of Secret Snowflake that will always be shrouded in mystery, such as gifting pineapples and crowbars.

Pineapples have been a central part of the winter holidays for as long as most of us can remember, but it was Montalbin’s class that started the legend.

“Our pineapple adventures had nothing to do with Secret Snowflake. Now they’re a big deal,” Montalbin explained. Though it started when a few friends left a pineapple on someone’s doorstep, pineapples have become one of the most popular gifts... and an NPA legend.

There is something magical about the winter traditions at NPA. In keeping with the spirit of the school, Secret Snowflake is a chance for everyone to come together as a whole, while recognizing each person as an individual.

“If you get a gift that actually reflects your personality it makes you really happy because you know that someone took the time to research your interests and get to know you,” Isabella Margolin, NPA junior explained.

With the growth of the school, it has become increasingly difficult for everyone to get to know each other. Secret Snowflake stands as a reminder that no matter how big we get, we are still a community.

Caroling at the local elderly care homes is likely the



DRAWING BY MORRIS BARNES
Michael Bazemore with a pineapple and a crowbar.

most heart warming experience of the holiday season. “It’s amazing that we are able to sing songs to these people and to see it bring them joy” Maia Lemann, NPA senior said. “One year a man was so moved that he stood up and borrowed Amy’s guitar to play a song for his deceased wife.” These moments remind us what the holidays are really about.

There is nothing quite like the uncontrollable exuberance of the whole school gathered together on the last day before winter break, watching as present upon present is unwrapped and revealed to thunderous applause that echoes throughout the social hall.

With the holiday season drawing to a close, we think about these legends and how they began, and the ones that were left behind. And as we watch the sixth pineapple or crowbar of the year being unwrapped, or see a smile on an elderly person’s face, we can’t imagine NPA without them. It’s a miracle that out of a tiny incident such a beautiful legend, tradition, and community can grow.

We will probably never know how these legends began, and perhaps that is what makes them so special. Although the school will continue to grow, our legends will grow with us. In the words of Cheyenne Montalbin; “They’ll continue on.”

Cross country season finishes strong

By Claire McCoy
Staff Writer

As NPA runners crossed the finish line at the North Coast Section Cross Country Championship, a landmark season came to a close. Six members of the cross country team traveled to Hayward, California to compete in the championships on November 22nd.

This was senior Seth Talkington’s final race with the team. “It was really nice,” Talkington said. “We had a good time at the meet.” The trip is Talkington’s best memory of his experience on the team.

Participating teams were divided into classes based on student body size, and within these classes girls and boys raced separately. NPA was in the fifth class, competing against other runners from schools with 100 to 200 students. “In our particular race there [were] about 150 girls running,” India Allen, a sophomore recalled.

Another milestone of this season was the first meet ever hosted by NPA. In previous years, NPA had always been a visiting team, but this season the school called the community forest trails of Redwood Park home. “It was a great success ... people enjoyed the course,” Matt Deshazo, the team’s coach said.

Deshazo has been coaching NPA runners for seven years. Recently, the team has experienced significant growth. “We have had the most runners stay with the team throughout the entire season ... consistency with practices was very good,” Deshazo reflected on this season.

In his coaching, Deshazo focuses on each individual as much as the team as a whole. Drills and exercises are tailored to various individual skill levels, for instance. “He really takes into account every individual on the team and what will help them the most. He’ll tell you specifically what you need to work on ... and then he’ll work with you to help you meet your goal,” junior Xavier Setzer said.

Running is an individual sport, but the team environment of cross country has benefited NPA runners in many ways. “It’s very hard to do your best when you’re by yourself. Runners usually excel with the camaraderie and competition of their teammates,” Deshazo said.

The runners bonded as a team through running together at practices and meets and through spending time getting to know



ABOVE: PHOTO SUBMITTED
BELOW: PHOTO BY JANE ARNOLD
Above, junior Xavier Setzer (right) takes the lead at the cross country meet at the Redwood Community Forest. This was NPA’s first time hosting a meet. Below, sophomore India Allen runs at the Redwood Forest meet.

each other on their recent trip to Hayward. Of the social aspect of the team Allen said, “It broadens my friend group; it forces me to spend time with people that I wouldn’t normally spend time with.”

The team environment also provides friendly competition and motivation. “Having a team to meet with, and a coach, definitely forces you to be more motivated,” Setzer said.

In combination with NPA’s rigorous academic environment, cross country creates a busy schedule and can be difficult to balance with academics. However, it can also be helpful in relation to school. “NPA can be pretty stressful. Running helps me deal with the stress, because when you’re running, it cuts every other thought out of your head,” Allen said.

Talkington joined cross country midway through this season, but has learned a lot even in his short time on the team. “Before [joining the team], I was very concerned about college and [had this] doubt in myself because I’m not the best, but now it’s different. I understand that I’m not going to be the fastest and no one’s going to kill me for it,” he said.

Talkington recalls his time on the team fondly and plans to continue running in the off-season and after leaving NPA. He was a key contributor to the team, as he “...proved to be one of our top five finishers at the end of the season,” Deshazo said.

Deshazo’s plans for the off-season? “Running, running, running!”



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for, but we only used music that we mutually liked to influence our sound.”

The band grew along with their ambitions. “We started to want to do something more serious than we had before. We had been playing together for a while now, and we had to make a choice: should we form a band or just stop? We just had to stop and say ‘Yeah. We gotta do that,’” Reynoso said.

As they grew they added bassist Rowe in May of 2012 and started playing increasingly larger shows. They moved up from gigs in Perrone’s basement to playing at festivals such as the Summer Arts and Music Festival in Benbow and opening for Earl Thomas. In total, UFO8 has played over 50 shows.

Over the past few months UFO8’s rate of shows has decreased. This is due to Reynoso and Perrone finding that keeping up with the band is hard to do when school becomes demanding. “I used to be so on it,” Reynoso said. “I used to go through and try to find as many shows as possible for us. That’s been hard lately.”

These temporary pauses do not deter Reynoso. He is currently working on a new album with UFO8, of which he is confident. Working on albums like this also helps him prepare for his future, one he hopes will be in music production. He expects NPA can help take him there: “What I’m really focusing on now though is getting into a school with a good music program, something that can help further my career into music production.”

Although there will be bumps in the road, it’s fair to say Reynoso and UFO8 are not done yet.



PHOTO SUBMITTED
NPA senior Chris Reynoso passionately sings and plays electric guitar at a UFO8 show.

Senior Wisdom: IB English oral commentaries are manageable, provided you put in ample effort

By Myel Gilkerson
Staff Writer

No matter how much you prepare for it, the English Oral Commentary is probably one of the most nerve-wracking (academic) things you will experience at NPA.

By this point in the year, most of the juniors hopefully have at least a vague understanding of what they will face. But for those of you who might not be so up to speed on the matter, here’s a quick recap: throughout the year, students study several literary works in-depth. This study culminates with a one-on-one, student-to-teacher presentation on two of those works. But here’s the kicker: the students have no idea until mere moments before the presentation which of those works will be chosen for them. Sounds scary, doesn’t it?

While the Oral Commentary may be incredibly daunting, and it’s very difficult to ensure a 100 percent success rate method, there are a few things you can do that really, really help. Unfortunately, all of these things are relatively long-term, so I can’t imagine there’s much you can do if you look back at this article in desperation the night before your Oral Commentary.

The main thing you should do, if you do absolutely nothing else to prepare, is participate in the class discussions. Whether they may seem like it or not, these are essentially miniature Oral Commentaries, but with a lot less pressure and a lot more help. It is remarkably easier to throw around ideas in a classroom setting than it is while matching Nick Wilson’s steely gaze as he records your Oral Commentary.

These classroom discussions help a lot with familiarity of the literary works, but you’ll also have to work on getting rid of those filler words that we so commonly use in our day-to-day lives. While they may be acceptable for the casual conversation, the snooty folks up in the IB like to think that we speak like some sort of flawless robot. It’s best to think of the Oral Commentary as an



Gilkerson

essay, and you wouldn’t ever, um, turn in anything with filler words in it. To get rid of these, though, can be quite challenging. The best thing to do is to start now. If possible, try to mentally scold yourself every time you find yourself using one of these words. That may sound awful but hey, it yields results. With a bit of self-discipline, you could be filler-free in no time.

Actually studying for the Oral Commentary outside of class time can be a bit more ambiguous. Try to pin down the core themes that you explore in class and then focus on those. The discussion topics raised in the Oral Commentary are less plot-related and more focused on the themes of the literary works, so there is little need to focus on minute details, like what color so-and-so’s shoes were. That is, unless that minute detail is something that is important to one of these main themes. Say that this character’s shoes were black, and the character happened to also be evil on a dastardly level. Get what I mean?

Getting back on topic, for studying I’d recommend flashcards. Write your main themes down on these bad boys and memorize them until they can’t possibly be forgotten. And do this with all the works—it’s not worth banking on the hope that you’ll get the book you studied for. This could lead to absolutely disastrous results.

Lastly, just don’t stress about it too much. For some of you, this may be impossible advice to follow, but it is better to be comfortable with what you do know than to know every last little detail and then be so nervous that you trip over your own words and end up producing a slightly more knowledgeable, but horrifically messy and disorganized Oral Commentary.

Find some way to incorporate all of these things into your preparation, and the Oral Commentary should become a much more manageable beast.



Heated about climate change: Greg King speaks on the purpose of the NPA Climate Project

By Gaia DeNisi
Staff Writer

Greg King, environmental activist and founder of the NPA Climate Project, has an optimistic outlook in regard to one of the world's most formidable issues.

"It's so exciting to see all the people of the world coming together with one voice to address climate change issues," King said.

After considerable planning, NPA students met to discuss the climate project for the first time on November 18th of this year. "The plan is to create projects within the group that address climate change locally. How will sea level rise? How will humans here be affected? How can our local municipalities make laws to address the issues?" King explained.

Though there are some specific goals in mind, King emphasized that the project is really whatever students want it to be.

"We'll be doing fund-raisers, and plays hopefully—whatever the students want to do," King said. "Arts can reflect and move society, I think, better than any other medium."

Among other things, the group is already planning for considerable fundraising so that they can travel to different climate change conferences over the course of the next two years.

"We'll probably be attending the Public Interest Environmental Law Conference (PIELC) in Eugene, Oregon in the spring of 2015. Students will be able to connect with attorneys and activists—people who are addressing it from a legal standpoint," King said.

In addition to this, there is the Bioneer's Conference in fall of 2015 in San Rafael, and of course the Conference Of The Parties (COP21) in France in December of 2015.

This is the first conference where the United Nations will take definitive action on this issue. "There are people who consider this the most important conference in history," King claimed.

The goal is to raise enough money to pay for everyone's trip, and the project is off to a strong start after the first fund-raiser which took place in October.

"We had the Bruce Cockburn house concert which raised \$3,500," King said. "We're hoping to raise \$20,000 for the trip to Paris."

King emphasized that the group doesn't want to hurt the school by fundraising from the same group of people. In order to not impinge on NPA's income, they are hoping to raise money primarily through crowd sourcing, events, and grants.



PHOTO BY MAYA MAKINO

Greg King speaks to students at the first NPA Climate Project meeting on November 18th, 2014.

"Grant writing is also a very important skill for students to have," King said. "We should be able to get grants for this kind of project that they wouldn't normally give to schools."

Above all, King started the project in order to give students an opportunity to actually do something about climate change.

"Everyone talks about climate change but doesn't know what to do about it," King said. "It's just another one of those big intangible problems."

When King met John Foran, a professor at University of California, Santa Barbara, it completely changed the way he thought about climate change. Speaking with Foran shortly after a climate change conference, King said he was happy and enthusiastic.

"That's what I want for all young people. Hope and excitement. That's what we need. Not to be downcast, but enthusiastic and happy to be causing change," King exclaimed.

The project is a way for students to have a positive outlook, and actually instigate change. Looking at the upcoming generation, King is full of hope for the future.

"The planet is a very resilient organism. There is plenty of hope here. When you are addressing these formidable issues as a society it can alleviate the stress of the task at hand," he said. "To have a positive approach to stopping climate change it will take everyone." The Climate Project is fully equipped to bring this hope to life.

Junior-senior play, "The Caucasian Chalk Circle," tackles contemporary issues

By Myel Gilkerson
Staff Writer

This year's junior and senior play is one that director Jean Bazemore hopes will bear cultural relevance to both students and audience members alike.

"I chose this play because I wanted to honor a tradition that started back in fifth-century ancient Greece, when theatre was a means of bringing the community together to look at issues of relevance to them," Bazemore said.

The play chosen for this year is "The Caucasian Chalk Circle" by Bertolt Brecht. It consists of an extended parable concerning a lowly kitchen maid who rescues the child of a wealthy nobleman and ends up being a better mother than either of the child's original parents.

Although written more than 60 years ago, the play will address many issues pertinent to today. Climate change, justice and the role of law enforcement are all topics that Bazemore plans to explore through the medium of this play.

"Brecht wanted theatre to be relevant; the last thing he would have wanted was to see a piece of theatre that had no relevance to the time in which it was being done," Bazemore said.

In order to adopt an even higher level of cultural relevance, Bazemore will collaborate with students in deter-

mining ways that the play can be modified. Additional scenes, edited dialogue and scenic design choices are all methods through which further cultural traction could be gained.

"[Playwright] Jean-Paul Sartre said that he wanted to write in such a way that no one could claim ignorance [as a reason] for non-action," Bazemore said. She hopes to accomplish a similar goal, though through the medium of directing.

"It's hard to say [if students and audience members] will be able to find the same cultural relevance as I do. You never know that, you just take risks when you create anything," Bazemore said.

Despite Bazemore's uncertainty on the matter, many students were able to find similar kinds of cultural relevance in the play.

"The play is culturally relevant in regard to the presence of inequality towards women and the corruption of the justice system," Shayan O'Loren said. O'Loren is a junior at NPA and chooses to take theatre as his art.

Unlike last year, this time Bazemore will only be working on one play for the juniors and seniors, as opposed to two.

"It seemed like the consensus from most of the students was that they wanted to have an experience, a communal experience that was one piece together that they all worked on, and so I tried to find something that would enable everyone to have a role that would be meaningful to them, and a piece that allowed us to expand beyond the particular textuality of the script," Bazemore said. This piece seems to fit within those parameters.

"I'm really excited about being able to do [the play], and we have so much talent. I hope that out of these two classes we will be able to find that talent," Bazemore said.

The play will premiere at the Arkley Center on January 29th. Hopefully it will be a memorable experience for everyone involved.

Changes to expect for NPA international trips

By Benjamin Leopardo
Staff Writer

NPA plans to make three non-regularly scheduled trips in the foreseeable future in addition to its annual voyages to Sweden and Thailand. The way in which student travel is funded is also undergoing significant changes this year.

"There will be a trip going to Europe, and the idea there is to spend a week doing theatre in England followed by a week of theatre in an exchange with a school in Spain—either Madrid or Barcelona," Marceau Verdieri, coordinator of NPA school trips said. "Also, [there will be] a week in France, where the students will spend a couple days in Paris looking at an art museum and then go to a sheep farm to work and volunteer."

Another trip, this one scheduled to occur in March will go to Japan, a place which seems to be of interest to students as some have taken it upon themselves to go there individually in the past. "The trip to Japan is going to be an exchange with a school in Kyoto that we're trying to put together," Verdieri commented. "This is a trip to help us solidify our links with the school and we're hoping it becomes a new sister school."

The last of these non-regularly scheduled trips currently in the works will be to India. This trip is planned for next winter. The trip will be to the state of Gujarat, where the school went before seven years ago and will be planned and chaperoned by history teacher Andrew Freeman.

"The purpose of the trip will be for our students to be able to immerse themselves in Indian culture and specifically in the culture of this particular place," Freeman remarked. "Gujarat's an interesting state in India. It's one of the most diverse states in India in terms of spiritual belief." This trip, however, is still very early in development and has yet to make any specific arrangements.

The process dedicated to arranging such trips begins long before the plane leaves the runway. "Usually it goes like this: the students demonstrate interest by signing up on the list, then we have an initial meeting with parents and students where we discuss the logistics of the trip, we try to guesstimate the price, and set dates that work for everybody," Verdieri said. "Then there are applications for scholarships. Students can request scholarships for up to \$500."

This is a process that is currently experiencing changes. "This year, for the first time, the group traveling will have to raise as much money as the group needs for scholarships," Verdieri explained. "This will make the trip cheaper for everybody and get everybody engaged in common activities and create, hopefully, a tight group."

NPA, as a school which has been traveling since its inception, continues not only to try and improve the experience of international travel, but also the effectiveness with which such travel is funded.

Lubowe is an invaluable asset to NPA

By James Bettis
Staff Writer

For years, Eve Lubowe, NPA's administrative assistant, has put in an effort to help NPA and its community as well as "keep the school running smoothly."

Lubowe assists students, parents and teachers alike. Her duties include but are not limited to informing people of events and giving advice. The job of administrative assistant acts as the unifying link between disparate facets of the community.

What she most enjoys about her job is "seeing the cycle" with the students as they grow into themselves, discovering new passions and abilities.

Lubowe explained, "Developmentally a lot happens in a student's life over the course of their four years at NPA. I enjoy watching the students craft their identities and develop their dreams."

Lubowe began her adventure at NPA in 2007, the year her son Gabe Lubowe enrolled as a freshman. While her son attended NPA, Lubowe helped the school through volunteer work. She started small, with cleaning and various

"little things," but was offered a job almost immediately after her son graduated.

Lubowe's son went on from NPA to become a pianist at the Berklee College of Music in Boston, as well to pursue his interest in philosophy on the side.

In 2011, Lubowe, very pleased with the school environment, took the opportunity for the position of administrative assistant in a heartbeat. She didn't want any future students to miss out on the experience her son had had.

From the beginning of her career at NPA, Lubowe understood that the four years spent in high school are integral to the development of one's future. This is what made NPA a perfect fit for her and ultimately influenced her decision to take the job of administrative assistance.

Lubowe has been positively fueled by the intrigue she finds in the developmental cycle of students at NPA. "It's just fascinating to see them develop their dreams and goals, and then grow into them," she said. Thanks to Lubowe, students come closer to realizing their dreams by attending NPA.



PHOTO BY TRINITY MORTON
Marceau Verdiere (front) and a guest look on at his abstract oil paintings during the opening night of his recent exhibit titled “The Aesthetics of a Doubtful Mind” at Piante Gallery in Old Town, Eureka.

The circuitous path that shaped Verdiere’s painting

By Maya Makino
Staff Writer

Marceau Verdiere, as well as being the NPA Visual Arts and French teacher, is also a prominent local artist who creates abstract oil paintings. He was born and raised in the Alsace region of France, and came to the U.S. in 1991. “Art is what brings me real inner peace,” Verdiere declared. “Making art is the only time I’m totally engaged with myself,” he said. For Verdiere, who suffers from attention deficit disorder, focusing long enough to read a book can be challenging. Art allows him valuable time to engage and calm his roaming mind. “It’s a healing process, it gives my mind a break,” he said.

It wasn’t until about 15 years ago that he seriously pursued art. “I kept doodling all the time,” Verdiere remarked. He started painting acrylic portraits in the styles of his favorite artists, such as Amedeo Modigliani, Gustav Klimt, and Egon Schiele. “It just didn’t quite...It was fun, but not as exciting as art could be,” he lamented.

Then, eight years ago, Verdiere went through a depressed phase and spent a winter isolated in a cabin in Big Lagoon. Without distractions, he experimented with abstract painting, “to try to put to words the kinds of things I was feeling,” he explained. “It was incredibly therapeutic, and incredibly pleasant in the unpleasantness of the moment. I’ve kept doing abstract art ever since.”

In his second year with NPA, Verdiere led a school trip to France where he became inspired. “I was fortunate enough to see a Rothko exhibit that just blew my mind. I just fell in love...the kind of spiritual...no, don’t use spiritual because I’m not a spiritual person, but the kind of really emotional connection to the work,” Verdiere mused. His work is greatly influenced by Rothko as well as other painters such as Vasuedo Gaitonde and Callum Innis.

“My theme is the struggle to deal with the dichotomy of U.S. society. The feeling that the U.S. pushes you on one side of the fence or another,” Verdiere said. This is why there are usually horizon lines in his work. This divides the work into two planes, allowing the viewers to decide for themselves what each plane means. For Verdiere, horizon lines represent adventure, and what’s beyond. “I can’t get away from putting horizon lines,” Verdiere said.

The artist did not discover his passion for painting until 15 years ago. However, in high school he created a series of graphic novels, which gently made fun of teachers. These

novels, which were mostly drawn on tables around the school, became popular and developed a following even among teachers.

Verdiere has always been fascinated by adventure. His second series of comics was about a character called “Demmareurrer” or “Starter.” Demmareurrer was a world traveler who sought adventure and fiddled with motorcycles, like Verdiere. “He was like what I want to be,” Verdiere explained.

Verdiere did go on to travel the world. After spending two years as a Marine Infantry Sergeant in the French army, he came to the U.S. “for love.” He followed a French girlfriend who was working as an “au pair,” or nanny. He then stayed in the U.S., living here illegally for the first three years. Before coming to NPA, Verdiere had numerous other jobs. He owned a restaurant, had a job as a salesman, worked in construction, and is a licensed real estate appraiser in the state of Georgia. His first job in the United States was owning and operating an ice cream truck. He exercised his artistic talent by painting a black van with teddy bears and rainbows.

Verdiere had never planned to teach until he met Jean Bazemore. After agreeing to tutor French students he didn’t hear from her until a month later, when she called him and asked if he wanted to be the new NPA French teacher— starting the next day.

After negotiating to start a few days later, Verdiere arrived at the old Masonic Lodge campus only to discover that he would be teaching classes in the kitchen, without a white board, tables or chairs. “At first I thought it was a joke, they had to keep reassuring me that this was real,” Verdiere said, shaking his head.

“This community values artistic creativity and growth,” Verdiere said. He is thankful that Jean and Michael have been so supportive. He was worried that he couldn’t balance art and teaching. However, this year with Nick Scanlon-Hill teaching the freshman and sophomore French classes, Verdiere feels perfectly balanced.

Verdiere believes that Humboldt is a very supportive community to be an artist in, though it can be frustrating because it is difficult to find people who offer the critical feedback necessary for growth. Verdiere’s advice to student artists is to “look at lots and lots of art and try to understand what the artist is trying to do.” He also advises students to “let go of judgment and embrace judgment, it’s not about being cradled. Trust honest people.”

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an apparently settled life. He explained, “[Afterthoughts] are beautiful little anomalies on the surface of the paintings.”

Verdiere recently exhibited his series at the Piante Gallery in Eureka. The show was titled “The Aesthetics of a Doubtful Mind.” The purpose of the show was to allow Verdiere to step back and make sure that the pieces worked together visually.

“For me, when I put together a creative work, I have to find my paintings beautiful. When they’re together, I have to find the experience beautiful as well,” he disclosed. “But you don’t see that when you’re working in the studio and there’s a mess all around you. [The pieces] don’t come to life, they don’t have the same sort of power as when they’re showcased in a nice space.”

Verdiere reported that he was pleased with the aesthetic presentation of his series. The final step in this project will be to pair each painting with a passage from the bible. Verdiere feels very strongly that he does not want his work to promote faith, because such a message would not reflect his beliefs. Yet despite his distaste towards religion, through this project Verdiere has developed an appreciation for pure, honest faith.

“Throughout my whole life because of what happened to me, I had this brute rejection of the church,” Verdiere said. “Reconnecting with [the church] through this medium did secure the way I think about it, but at the same time allowed me to take away some of the baggage that I had about it—to be able to respect, more broadly, the idea of faith and human beings and what it can do for them in a very positive way.”

The main source of his newfound appreciation for faith came in the form of a man named Bertrand Schlund, the curator for Verdiere’s exhibit. Schlund is a well-educated art historian who is in charge of the artistic patrimony of the Catholic Church. Schlund also has a completely unshakeable faith in God, which has made it difficult for him to understand Marceau’s atheism. Despite their differences, Verdiere said that they have become great friends.

Verdiere remarked, “I love this man. He’s an interesting, beautiful human being. I’ve learned so much just from our discussion...”

Verdiere said their enriching conversations sometimes last up to four or five hours. Because of his companionship with Schlund, he has come to appreciate the value of faith. The reason for this, he said, is that he has now seen faith as “pure,” as opposed to through the lens or the structure of the church that marked his childhood with trauma.

“The more I work on this project and the more I think about faith, the distance of God and things of this sort, the more I trust that my instinct is right. But that being said, [this project] gave me a new appreciation for people who have pure faith. An appreciation for the value of that,” he said.

Verdiere remains as firm as ever in his own beliefs, but delving into the introspection and thought process of this project has allowed him to better understand his rejection of religion.

Verdiere concluded, “I’ve learned that I am capable of creating a body of work that reaches beyond what I’m comfortable with generally. I never thought I’d be going into a project that is so closely linked with something I’m so strongly opposed to. But I’ve really enjoyed having that discussion with myself and with the church.”



PHOTO BY TRINITY MORTON
A woman stares, intrigued by Marceau Verdiere’s work during the opening night at Piante Gallery.

Voter turnout low for 2014 midterm elections; Humboldt County Registrar of Voters weighs in

By Maia Lemann
Staff Writer

A mere one third of the eligible voting population of the United States participated in the 2014 midterms. President Barack Obama addressed the issue after the results of this year’s midterms were announced: “[To] everyone who voted, I want you to know that I hear you. To the two-thirds of voters who chose not to participate in the process yesterday, I hear you, too.”

There are many people who do not see the value in voting, which is evident from voter turnout. Many individuals concerned by this trend point to the substantial lack of young voters.

Humboldt County’s Registrar of Voters, Carolyn Crnich, is one of those people. “I would like to make it my mission to encourage young voters to take an interest in their local politics. Be an informed voter. Make a decision that follows your conscience,” Crnich said.

Crnich remembers turning 18 and be-

ing able to vote as a momentous occasion. “It was a big deal to me and my family. The privilege of age,” Crnich said. That seems to be changing.

Crnich believes education plays a role in teens’ lack of interest in voting. “Schools do not emphasize that process [of voting] the way they used to,” Crnich explained. “When I was in high school one of the classes that was mandatory in order to graduate was civics. Changes in curriculum have changed things for students,” Crnich said.

“Young people are not interested [in voting, they’re] afraid they’ll be called for jury duty, or don’t know how to register,” Crnich explained. “18 to 26-year-olds are the least participating demographic.”

Being a young voter may seem daunting. Andrew Freeman admits that he made mistakes as a young voter, but that this was necessary in becoming the well-informed voter he is today. Furthermore, eligible teenagers should not be put off by the idea of messing up. Freeman’s biggest hope is

that he “encourages students to be involved on all levels.”

Early on in Freeman’s voting career he accidentally voted against legalizing same-sex marriage. “I didn’t realize what the proposition was about,” he admitted. Mistakes like these led him to research topics more thoroughly and become more informed.

“Voting is small potatoes when it comes to service,” Freeman explained. He sees voting as a small but necessary step in being an engaged citizen. He feels it is more helpful when people volunteer in their community. “I absolutely demand [community service],” he said.

Both Crnich and Freeman are daunted by a future where fewer citizens participate in politics. “It’s really dangerous, it weakens us as a nation when you don’t have an active citizenry. We do have the power, but it takes effort,” Freeman said. “It is concerning. Apathy seems to be growing in the country. It comes from a place of discouragement and lack of civic education.” This complacency

leads to candidates in office that don’t represent individuals’ views.

“Officials should be elected by the majority, but if only select groups vote all opinions are not expressed,” Crnich explained. “It will only leave more space for those special interests to win elections.”

Freeman stressed the importance of remaining hopeful and positive, and that each person’s contribution matters. “[There’s] so much possibility. The [existing] infrastructure allows us to put power in the people’s hands. It’s a lot of work,” he said.

There are other ways of contributing to politics as well. He explained the importance of protesting, letter writing, and attending public meetings. These are all aspects that he participates in. “Anything to make your voice heard by those who are supposed to represent you is positive,” Freeman explained.

If you want something to change, Freeman expounded that “at some point you have to engage in the process.” Idleness does not spark revolution.



Cherished NPA tradition of caroling to the elderly explained

By Liam Achterberg-Muñoz
Staff Writer

The sound of 140 high school students tenderly singing to the elderly is linked to one of NPA’s oldest and sweetest traditions. At NPA, the holiday season brings about events and customs that date back to the school’s early years, and caroling at elderly care homes is no exception.

Jean Bazemore began the annual event years ago with Suzuki Summer Academy students. “It started with my mother. She had Alzheimer’s for the last ten years of her life and she went to the Alzheimer’s Day Care Center in Eureka,” Bazemore recalled. “I used to take young students over to play [music].” It was a beginning founded in providing joy for people that may not have received enough attention, and NPA caroling continues that legacy today.

Bazemore is disappointed that the students can no longer have such a personal relationship with the people they visit. “We used to take little gifts also at that time and talk with the people for longer periods afterwards,” she commented. “We participated more extensively than we do now, because we were much smaller then.” An upside of the school’s growth is that the choir can attend more places and have a more impactful sound.

The choir incorporates songs from a variety of cultures and celebrations. This diversity is important for the health of the choir and for everyone involved. “We have always

tried to include songs from other faiths as well,” Bazemore said. This means that the repertoire of songs that are sung is not limited only to common Christmas carols, but also includes African and Jewish songs.

Over the years, several new traditions have been incorporated into the event. “[Amy and Michael Bazemore] had been peripherally involved with it in the earlier years before we became a school,” Bazemore said. “Amy started the tradition of decorating socks when she and Michael came back from Atlanta.”

Decorating socks and caroling for the elderly might seem like a trivial thing to do, but it can really matter to the people who receive them. “You [NPA students] are young people and you have so much energy and it provides hope for them,” Bazemore remarked.

This winter tradition not only benefits the elderly folks the school visits, but the people at NPA as well. Bazemore explained, “We are enriched by the experience and brought to think about the significance of our own lives, how we choose to spend our time, and I think that’s very important.”

This annual event is also a chance for the choir to perform for an audience and is a way to finally put all the hours spent on Friday afternoons to use for a good purpose. Amy Bazemore spearheads the choir and her leadership has changed the holiday occasion. Jean Bazemore explained, “We never had a real choir until Amy came back.” The annual function has evolved from a small group of young students playing instruments to a grand group of gifted singers, but something hasn’t changed: the joy they bring to the communities in elderly care homes.

Bazemore concluded, “[You’re] like roses: you’re beautiful. And just bringing that beauty from your own spirits into the lives these people have, plus music, is a beautiful experience for [them] to have.”

The annual Halloween House: a creative opportunity to bond with children and peers

By Rosemary Stevens
Staff Writer

Every year NPA hosts an assortment of elementary students at Jean Bazemore’s house for a Halloween extravaganza.

This year 120 students came, more than the Halloween House has ever seen before. Bazemore, the principal of the school and co-founder of the Halloween House, has always cherished the holiday.

“It began in my family’s love for this holiday, of being able to dress up and step into a role that’s other than yourself. The love of play,” Bazemore said on the origin of the Halloween House.

Before NPA, the students at Bazemore’s Suzuki Summer Academy were given the opportunity to dress up and give a music recital on Halloween. This was the original form of the Halloween house. Today music is still heard throughout Bazemore’s house on Halloween, but much more can be seen. NPA students guide groups of children through ten different themed stations full of treats, activities and performances.

The Halloween House became one of NPA’s unique traditions because “it’s important to keep the child in you alive and incorporate, as teenagers, a kind of joy and innocence that some teenagers are forced to forget,” Bazemore explained.

At the Halloween House everyone cannot help but have fun. NPA students, however, do a lot more than just play all day. During the entire morning the students, with little to no guidance from teachers or adults, transform Bazemore’s house and various groves outside into places of fantasy and excitement. Mystical rooms include the fortune-telling room or the fairy forest.

Bazemore commented, “Watching you work together and thinking how incredibly beautiful it is just to watch teenagers taking responsibility, creating and working together with very little adult supervision—watching you make it happen is just a joy.”

Every NPA student at the Halloween House has an opportunity to make connections with younger kids, perhaps while painting their faces, guiding them from room to room, helping them decorate a cookie or even performing for them as a



PHOTO SUBMITTED
Rosemary Stevens (right) paints a child’s face during the Halloween House. Small moments like these provide opportunity for NPA students to connect with the visiting children and create a memorable experience.

gnome or a pirate.

Bazemore said she wants NPA students to experience “...the joy of seeing and working with younger children,” while working on the Halloween house. She noted, “The children help teenagers forget about worrying about being cool.”

The Halloween house is also a perfect time to get to know other students at the school. NPA students from all the grades work together on their stations to create something magical for the children. Then they get to enjoy watching the little kindergartners stand on their tip-toes

to reach hanging doughnuts or the fifth graders stubbornly refuse to be afraid in the scary room.

“It’s a great opportunity to know the joy that comes from collaboration, working together to make something happen. If it turns out that you’re proud of what you’re able to do, then that’s an added benefit,” Bazemore said.

The Halloween House is a special and highly valuable tradition at NPA. Each year it has grown in size and creativity, and NPA students can only wonder what experiences next year’s Halloween House will provide.

Student ensemble with original sound



PHOTO BY NICK WILSON
From left to right: Morris Barnes, Clark Robertson, Jeremy Reiner and Matt Wardynski. The ensemble’s take on the Abbey Road photo is unique and reflects their personalities, much like the music they play together.

By Claire McCoy
Staff Writer

Twice a week, the sound of distant rock music drifts across campus. It is the ensemble elective, comprised of Matt Wardynski, Clark Robertson, Morris Barnes and Jeremy Reiner.

Wardynski and Robertson started the group at the beginning of this school year, with Barnes and Reiner joining shortly thereafter. The group initially set out to play metal music, but has since shifted to a variety that includes rock and jazz while retaining some metal.

Wardynski, a junior, has been playing the clarinet for six years and occasionally plays the drums. He values the diversity of the music the group plays. “The thing about the elective that really helps me grow is playing as many styles of music as we do. I like to appreciate as many different genres as I can, and it’s easier to appreciate a genre if you’ve played it,” he said. He enjoys the unexpected in music, such as a clarinet playing rock.

Wardynski is very involved in music both inside and outside of school, playing in NPA’s Jazz Band and Chamber Orchestra in addition to three local music groups.

Robertson is a multi-talented musician, playing drums, electric guitar and keyboard in the ensemble. “Most of the time I’m playing music it’s just by myself ... so it’s nice to be able to have an outlet to play with other musicians,” he said. Also in his junior year, Robertson is a part of NPA’s Jazz Band and IB music class.

A recent development for the band has been the opportunity to play in the newly made music studio in Robertson’s house, which they hope to continue doing. Robertson has been playing piano since age five, and more recently took up drums and guitar.

“The thing about the elective that really helps me grow is playing as many styles of music as we do. I like to appreciate as many different genres as I can, and it’s easier to appreciate a genre if you’ve played it.”
Matt Wardynski

The group’s guitarist, Barnes, enjoys the ensemble’s spontaneity. “[We play] whatever catches our fancy,” he said. In addition to guitar lessons outside of school, Barnes joined NPA’s Jazz Band this year. As a senior, he hopes to see the ensemble continue to thrive after he graduates. Barnes appreciates NPA’s vibrant music community in that “...a lot of people are excited about music. People bond over music.”

Reiner, a sophomore, plays the bass guitar. He also plays cello in NPA’s Jazz Band and Chamber Orchestra.

The ensemble had a successful performance at NPA’s most recent cabaret, and hopes to perform again at a possible second cabaret this spring. “[Playing] for the student body, that was lots of fun,” Wardynski recalled. They also plan on playing at Eureka’s Arts Alive in the future.

The four musicians enjoy jamming together and improvising as they play. In this way, they create original music with a unique sound. “You just need to have the mental connections,” Wardynski said of jamming. “That’s something we’re working on. Maybe just playing together more will help with being mentally in sync,” he concluded.

Through playing music together, the members of the ensemble have created and strengthened friendships that may not have otherwise formed. This group is one example of music’s role in the NPA community—as Robertson said, “it brings people together.”



Arnold King’s work in China: brightening lives across the globe

By Zaliah Finegan
Staff Writer

Arnold King has been mesmerized with the idea of going to China since he was a child and read “Tintin in Tibet.” When he was offered a teaching position at a relocation center in Yushu, he jumped at the opportunity and thus began a long journey.

“Tibet is a really magical place,” King said as he recounted his story. “Getting to go there was definitely like a deep dream come true, but my love for Tibet has definitely changed, since the Tibet of the mind is not much like the Tibet of reality.”

King was able to experience for himself what living in Tibet was like. He saw how the political and economic side of China functions and he was able to realize that it was not the paradise that he had believed it to be.

King taught at schools designed for relocated nomads who traditionally herded yak and lived simple solitary lives. These nomads had been forced by the Chinese government to come into cities and communities, but they received no support once they arrived.

“All their skills, generation after generation, were all based on herding yaks,” King said. “They didn’t have a lot of capacity to really succeed. The purpose of the school was to provide capacity for this at-risk population.”

King having just graduated from HSU, had no teaching experience. Nevertheless, he still worked at many different schools while there, one of which was a secret monk school. It was this school where King was planned to be a few hours after the earthquake struck.

“This class was crazy. I had no materials. It was [a class of] six-year-olds on the laps of their 60-year-old grandmas. I started building them up from the beginning,” King said as he explained the monk school. “The building where I taught that class, I was going to be there at 9 o’clock. The earthquake struck at 7:23. That building fell down.”

King was in Yushu when a 7.1 magnitude earthquake struck, which destroyed 70% of the buildings. King had planned to stay for six months to a year but his trip came to an end in just three months. He stayed for a week after the earthquake to help with anything he could.

“You have this idea that you are in an earthquake and you survive and you go and save people, right? That’s what you do. But there wasn’t any saving to be done,” King said



PHOTO BY ARNOLD KING
The destruction caused by the earthquake. With the help of the Lost Coast Rotaract, Arnold King started an international non-profit to aid victims of the earthquake in recovering.

as he remembered the day of the earthquake. “The hard truth is that the reason that stuff makes it on television is because it’s special and rare. You’re mostly just pulling out people that didn’t get saved. I didn’t find anyone who was alive.”

“You have this idea that you are in an earthquake and you survive and you go and save people, right? ... The hard truth is that the reason that stuff makes it on television is because it’s special and rare. You’re mostly just pulling out people that didn’t get saved. I didn’t find anyone who was alive.”

Arnold King

King was told he had to leave Yushu and he returned home, but always planned to come back. After returning to Humboldt he worked alongside the Lost Coast Rotaract to support the people in Tibet after the disaster.

“I wasn’t in the position to be as generous as I was be-

ing,” King said, expressing his relief that the Rotaract had taken on his project as an international non-profit.

King has been able to raise \$10,000 over the past few years with the help of the Rotaract and the Humboldt State Geography Society. King’s profits go to victims of the earthquake and provide them with a chance to recover, thrive and make it possible for them to attend other training centers in Shini.

“Some of my money went toward two guys getting their taxi drivers’ licenses,” King said. “Some of the money we raised went towards a girl studying hairdressing in Xining and she opened a place in Yushu. The last portion of the money I recently raised went towards this guy who opened a welding shop.”

King was able to return to Yushu last year. This time it was more of a self discovery than his previous visit. Yushu had changed from what it once was and he didn’t feel the connection he once had.

“I feel like I was really accomplished with [helping Yushu] for a while and it’s a little heartbreaking when you feel like you don’t make that connection anymore,” King said. “There are a lot of things around [Humboldt] that I want to help out with, but I still feel really attached to Tibet. There’s more I want to do there. I don’t want to give up.”

Among new electives: Angela Petricca’s fierce Flute Mafia

By Benjamin Leopardo
Staff Writer

For anyone who’s been wondering where that mysterious flute music has been coming from on Tuesday and Friday afternoons, the origin is the “Flute Mafia.” This is a new ensemble led by NPA’s most experienced flautist, senior Angela Petricca.

“We’ve been playing things ranging from Tchaikovsky’s ‘The Sugar Plum Fairy’ from ‘The Nutcracker’ to most recently, ‘This is Halloween’ by Danny Elfman,” Petricca said regarding what her quartet has been up to so far. She added that now the group is moving into playing “mostly Christmas music ... ‘Carol of the Bells,’ ‘Deck the Halls’ and other things like that.”

Petricca not only leads the ensemble, but also teaches it. She has been playing the flute for 13 years. “I grew up in a musical family and my mom had always played flute when I was a little kid. So, of course I wanted to learn flute but it wasn’t really a question. It was more like ‘oh yeah, of course she’s playing flute,’” Petricca said.

Sophomore Isaac Murphy and freshmen Fiona Shaughnessy and Melina Wardynski make up the rest of ensemble, with parts organized by assigning first, second, third and fourth flute. “Usually the first flute has all the solos and melodies so I switch that around. I usually take the fourth part which is the lowest part. It’s actually usually a harder part to play as well because it’s low and a flute

plays higher so it’s not really natural to the instrument,” Petricca commented. She described the other parts as well, “Usually they have close harmonies or counter melodies, and they sometimes get melodies.”

The ensemble has plans for performance outside the elective period. “We’re doing an all school meeting before winter break. All our Christmas stuff will be performed there,” Petricca said. “Next semester, [we’ll probably play] another Arts Alive and other gigs around town.”

Petricca believes the flute elective is going well. “It’s a really great group. They’re all really good students and they all respect me and I respect them so it’s really easy to teach,” she said. “It’s not hard for me to teach them something musical. I usually give them an idea to think about. Then we play the song again and we keep something in mind or we work on certain technical parts that are hard. They’re all getting better. We’re going to keep playing music and hopefully move on to harder parts.”

Petricca, as a senior, will need to pass the ensemble onto new leadership next year. “Since this is my last year, I’m trying to set an example for Isaac Murphy who I think will be [teaching] it next year.”

The “Flute Mafia” serves as a perfect example of NPA as a place where students demonstrate initiative in pursuing their passions and take an active role in the education of themselves and their peers.

PHOTO BY NICK WILSON

From left to right: freshman Melina Wardynski, freshman Fiona O’Shaughnessy, sophomore Isaac Murphy and senior Angela Petricca. The group was started by Petricca at the beginning of this year. She has been playing the flute for 13 years. The “Flute Mafia” has been making progress with learning difficult flute parts and growing as musicians. They have performed holiday music at Arts Alive and played at an all school meeting. Next year, the group will most likely be led by Murphy.





PHOTOS SUBMITTED

Above, Nico Krell (left) expresses his attitude while getting into character during a theatre-based extracurricular activity at Princeton University. Below, Krell reads from a script in preparation for a play. Krell graduated from NPA last year and is currently a freshman in college. Though he is busy, Krell is enjoying his new life.

Alumnus Nico Krell shares his insights on adjusting to college life at Princeton University

By **Maia Lemann**
Staff Writer

“You decide how much you want to put into it without dying,” Nico Krell explained, his voice evidently exhausted from his new life in college. Krell graduated NPA in 2014 and is now attending Princeton University.

Krell keeps himself busy at Princeton. Besides his rigorous courses he has become extensively involved with several student-organized drama groups to satiate his love for theatre. He has been acting, auditioning, designing lights, directing and learning more about comedy.

Krell has to look outside of the classroom for his theatre fix due to Princeton’s lack of a theatre major. This was one of his misgivings about Princeton. However, Krell decided to attend because he had learned to appreciate an academic approach to the arts during his time at NPA.

If it was not for Krell’s insistent pursuit of drama-focused extracurricular activities, school could have been doable. “It could have been manageable,” he said, but there is still more he wishes to participate in. “There’s always an extended list of things I wish I could do. You have to prioritize.”

Krell explained that school is as much work as you want it to be. “Some people get to bed by ten every night, some at five in the morning. Life is really the effort you decide to commit [to it]. Each person is responsible for their own potential,” he said.

There are a variety of people in college. “There’s a lot of kids here who didn’t realize they’d get in, it was a miracle.” At the same time Krell noted that there is a substantial population of Princeton students who didn’t need to worry since they had their parents’ legacy to rely on.

It’s a race to see who can get settled into college life first and make friends. “Everyone is new, it totally doesn’t matter, I had to understand that to be happy. Dorm life is very strange. School life and home life are so connected it’s hard to escape. There’s no separation,” Krell said.

College is an enormous change from

high school. Krell explained that Humboldt and NPA provide a unique background for NPA graduates going into brand new situations, often to significantly larger schools.

“You don’t know everybody. It’s a strange transition to not be seeing the same people everyday,” Krell explained. He noted other differences as well. “There are going to be people who think they’ve figured out the social structure...[It’s] just a matter of not following the masses. Keep your independent beliefs.” This is an ability he attributes partly to NPA.

“Honestly, NPA prepared me so much. Graduating from NPA, you excel at reading and discussing literature even if you don’t realize it,” Krell said. He went on to describe the ways in which NPA prepares its graduates, especially noting the importance of becoming comfortable talking to teachers. Teachers at NPA are easier to approach, which is good practice for professors at college. “At college it’s intimidating to talk to teachers, but [it’s] very valuable.” Teachers at NPA are happy to engage academically with their students outside of class, which made Krell more comfortable talking to his educators.

Though NPA was helpful, there were difficulties, one of which Krell identified as college applications. “[The college process] was a lot more stress than it needed to be. The [hardest] part was delegating tasks and waiting to see if you got in. [But] even if it’s stressful you get things done in the end.”

Besides NPA assuring the completion of tasks, its intimate community closely bonds classmates. “Leaving is a bittersweet experience,” Krell said. He and his friends maintain contact by sending each other snail mail.

Krell reported that he is enjoying his new life at college. “NPA teaches you to adapt and be happy wherever you are,” Krell said. “College is broad, there are lots of paths. It really is the time to explore. No matter what, don’t worry. Do things that you like, even if it’s tough make sure you find it interesting. Otherwise stop. You’ll figure it out.”



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